

# **THE SUNDOWNER**

## **A Townhome Community**

**Major General Plan Amendment Narrative Report  
NWC Hayden and Shea Boulevard**

**The Sundowner Townhomes  
By: Odyssey Homes**

**Request for Major General Plan Amendment from  
Rural to Suburban Neighborhood PA-21-2005**

## **Introduction**

This request is for a major general plan amendment from the Rural Neighborhoods land use category to the Suburban Neighborhoods land use category on 7.9 net acres (10.08 acres gross) located on the north side of Shea Boulevard west of Hayden Road ("the Property"). The Property is currently developed with eight single-family homes built from 1950 to 1977. It is bordered by Starfire golf course to the North, Sundown Ranch Estates residential to the West, La Cuesta residential to the South, and Hayden Road and Hayden Park, a small office complex, to the East.

The proposed development would consist of 74 to 79 townhomes in eight clusters, creating a 'streetscape' appearance of large, single family residences, consistent with the adjacent Sundown Ranch community. The concept is to create a series of individual neighborhoods, clustered around an entry/auto court. The townhomes will be oriented towards the golf course to the extent possible, providing a private, quiet living environment for each home. With the exception of the cluster on the corner of Shea and Sundown, the townhomes will be a combination of one and two story elements, creating visual diversity through the juxtapositioning of these architectural forms. The cluster on the corner of Shea and Sundown will be primarily one story, to create a visual link to the existing single story community as one progresses north on Sundown Drive.

The Shea Corridor has developed into a primarily commercial area, with several formerly Rural Neighborhood parcels being redesignated for commercial land uses.

In determining the compatibility of the proposed development with each of the elements of the General Plan, the developer will ensure that the property not only aligns itself with the immediate neighborhood, but also within the context of the City of Scottsdale.

The Property, given its adjoining and surrounding land uses, proximity to Shea Boulevard, and general location within the City of Scottsdale, clearly meets and exceeds the Goals and Approaches articulated in the six Guiding Principles of the General Plan. Additionally, the analysis provided of the proposed General Plan Amendment from Rural Neighborhood to Suburban Neighborhood substantiates the proposed land use while being consistent with the principles of the City of Scottsdale.

## **Conformance with the Guiding Principles.**

This request is for a major General Plan Amendment to the Land Use Map contained in the Land Use element of the General Plan. As previously stated, six guiding principles articulate how the appropriateness of a land use change to the General Plan is to be qualified. The six guiding principles are:

- Character and Lifestyle
- Economic Vitality
- Neighborhoods
- Open Space
- Sustainability
- Transportation

Following is an analysis of how this application and the proposed development conforms to the Guiding Principles found within the City of Scottsdale's General Plan.

### **I. Character and Lifestyle Element.**

#### **A. Character and Lifestyle.**

The Character and Lifestyle Guiding Principle contains two elements, the Character and Design element, and the Land Use element. The character and design element of the Character and Lifestyle Guiding principle seeks to promote quality development and redevelopment that is sustainable and appropriate in striking a balance between natural desert settings, historical significant sites and structures and the surrounding neighborhood context.

As the Property is neither in a natural desert setting or historically significant site, this analysis primarily focuses on the surrounding neighborhood context.

The Character and Design Element Map of the General Plan designates Property as Rural Neighborhood. Furthermore, Shea Boulevard is designated as a Visually Important roadway.

In addition to the character and design factors discussed above, this major General Plan Amendment is consistent with the following Goals and Approaches contained within the character and design element as follows.

**1) Determine the appropriateness of all development in terms of community goals surrounding area character and the specific context of the surrounding neighborhood.**

Currently, there is low-density residential located east and south of the subject property, minor office to the west, and a golf course and medium density condominiums to the north. The proposed Sundowner project satisfies the 'appropriateness' concern by meeting the community goal of promoting low to medium density residential development. Many of the single family lots on the North side of Shea to the East of the property have been rezoned for commercial uses, and the Sundown Ranch neighborhood association expressed their concerns to the City regarding this issue, stating that the neighborhoods preference was for the area to remain with a residential context.

As indicated in the accompanying conceptual sketches, the design intent for this community is to create a number of housing clusters surrounding separate automobile courts. Although the clusters will be composed of one and two story townhomes, the visual effect as one travels along Shea Boulevard will be that of several large homes built around entry courtyards and sitting behind a major landscape feature bordering Shea.

It is also compatible with the surrounding West Cactus Character Area, in that the architectural style of the homes will be Mediterranean. The proposed development will use tile roofs, stucco walls with stone accent elements, deeply recessed windows and wood trellises and other wood detailing to further articulate the homes. This style is compatible with the surrounding communities.

**2) Review the design of all development proposals to foster quality design that enhances Scottsdale as a unique southwestern desert community.**

The Design Review Board must first approve the proposal for the Sundowner development, determining its compatibility with both the area and the design standards expected from the City.

**3) Identify Scottsdale's historic archeological and cultural resources, promote an awareness of them for future generations, and support their preservation and conservation.**

This Property is not designated as historic, archeologically or culturally significant, and as such, no preservation or conservation is necessary.

**4) Encourage "streetscapes" for major roadways that promote the City's visual quality and character and blend into the character of the surrounding area.**

The Property is located on Shea Boulevard; a visually significant roadway that has substantial traffic flows. Accordingly, special attention will be paid to the separation of vehicular traffic on Shea and the Sundowner residential community. Also, the south side of the Property is designed to integrate the built environment with the larger community as a whole. Significant landscaping, including a variety of native plants and trees, will be included in the proposed development, as discussed in question six (6) below.

**5) Build upon the significant role the arts have played in shaping our community's image and lifestyle by maximizing the potential of public art to enrich the daily lives of the people that live in or visit Scottsdale.**

Public art is not anticipated in this project given its small size.

**6) Recognize the value and visual significance that landscaping has upon the character of the community and maintain standards that result in substantial material landscaping that reinforces the character of the City.**

With respect to landscaping, the proposed development is intended to carry the character and maturity of the landscaping which defines the entrance to the Sundowner residential areas throughout the community. There will be a low wall or berm along the Shea property line separating the private access road from Shea Boulevard. The area between Shea and the private roadway and the areas between the private road and the homes will be extensively landscaped. The auto courts are of a more urban nature and as such will have significant hard landscaping in the form of

patterned brick pavers. However, the courtyards have been made large enough to include some significant trees in the center and other planting along the edges to create a much softer, mature neighborhood environment.

The rear yards of the individual homes will be a mix of hard and soft landscaping, and the common areas will have additional soft landscaping.

**7) Encourage sensitive outdoor lighting that reflects the needs and character of different parts of the City.**

With the exception of the necessary light standards along Shea Boulevard, the lighting will be kept quite subdued. Each entry court will be identified with a trellised entry gate with down lighting on the entry pillars and the paving. Residential lighting on the exterior of each home plus additional lighting on the landscape features will light the auto courts. Guest parking areas and pathways will be lit with low level bollard lighting and landscape lighting.

**B. Land Use Element**

The City's mandate is that land uses should compliment each other visually, esthetically, socially, and economically. Therefore, it is important that any General Plan Use Amendment demonstrate its compatibility while greatly minimizing conflict or damage to the surrounding area and general character of the City. The Property's existing Rural low-density residential land use designation was deemed appropriate, given the population and traffic on Shea at the time of the designation. However, the increased traffic on Shea has reduced the appropriateness of low density residential on this particular property, given that the entire parcel fronts Shea. As previously mentioned, several parcels fronting Shea to the East of the property have already been rezoned commercial, which is a concern of the adjacent Sundown Ranch residential community. The Suburban Neighborhood land use designation is at a minimum as appropriate as minor office, given both the local residents wishes and the particular impact of Shea Boulevard on the property. And, as a land use, the proposed medium density residential use is appropriate, given the demand for housing stock within the Shea corridor and to buffer and transition from Shea Boulevard.

The City has nine goals in the Land Use element of the Character and Design guiding principals regarding the appropriateness of a proposed change in land use designations:

**1) Recognize Scottsdale's role as a major regional economic and social center, featuring business, tourism and cultural activities.**

Changing the land use designation from Rural to Suburban would have virtually no effect on the recognition of Scottsdale as a business/tourist/cultural center. As the Property is in close proximity to existing office development, major commercial retail, and the 101 freeway, the proposed Sundowner Project actually creates a superior opportunity to continue Scottsdale's role as a major regional economic and business community by placing increased numbers of consumers and workers in a relatively small parcel.

**2) Coordinate land uses effecting regional networks (mobility, economic, and open space) with adjacent jurisdictions to maintain the integrity and efficiency of each network.**

The small size of the Property makes it relatively insignificant in regards to 'coordinating land uses effecting regional networks with adjacent jurisdictions'.

However, the Property is located on a major arterial with access to the 101 just over 1 mile to the East. There is also a bus stop on the northwest corner of Hayden and Shea. As thousands of homeowners are forced to move further and further out of the downtown centers due to the Valley's growth over the last few decades, Sundowner will allow residents to live, work and play in proximity to necessary goods and services, relieving strain on the already stressed freeway system.

**3) Encourage the transition of land uses for more intense, regional and citywide activity areas to less intense activity areas within local neighborhoods.**

The proposed development provides an appropriate transition of land use from the commercial/retail properties located along Shea to the existing medium to low density residential located north, south, and west of the site.

**4) Maintain a balance of land uses that support a high quality of life, a diverse mixture of housing and leisure opportunities and the economic base needed to secure resources to support the community.**

The existing zoning on the property allows for one home per acre. The site's relationship to Shea makes it difficult for homeowners to sell the existing homes on the resale market, while making renovations of the 30 to 50 year old homes a financially risky proposition. Therefore, several of the homes have fallen into a state of disrepair, becoming an eyesore for the thousands of people who pass them every day.

Appropriately, the City decided to 'enhance and protect the existing residential areas while allowing flexibility in residential parcels having Shea frontage' in the Shea Area Plan adopted June 15, 1993.

The proposed development would add new, medium density residential housing to the area rather than being forced to the outer edges of the Valley.

Also, as there is a fairly intense commercial use of land within a few miles of the Property in either direction, the medium density residential land use will provide a larger economic base needed to support the businesses of the local area.

**5) Develop land use patterns that are compatible with and support a variety of mobility opportunities/choices and service provisions.**

Higher density residential should be located in close proximity to alternative modes of transportation. As previously mentioned, the Property is in close proximity to the Loop 101, public transportation options, pedestrian and bicycle trails.

**6) Promote land use patterns that conserve resources such as land, clean air, water, and energy and serve all people within the community.**

Development of the project will utilize existing utilities and infrastructure. Reduction in commuting for the residents of the Project will assist in conservation of resources.

**7) Sensitively integrate land uses into the surrounding physical and natural environments, the neighborhood setting, and the neighborhood itself.**



The Property will provide an appropriate transition from highly traveled Shea Boulevard to the existing low-density land uses on all sides, while preserving residential character.

**8) Encourage land uses that create a sense of community among those who work, live, and play within local neighborhoods.**

The proposed development provides significantly more housing above the existing land use in close proximity to the commercial core along Shea Boulevard. These residents will be the work force, consumers, and neighbors that support the local economy.

**9) Provide a broad variety of land uses that create a high level of synergy within mixed-use neighborhoods.**

The Property is located within an area containing a variety of land uses. It provides an appropriate transition from Shea Boulevard north to the golf course and more medium density residential, finally surrounded by low density residential.

## **II. Economic Vitality.**

The economic vitality guiding principal is based on seven goals, which are enumerated below:

**1) Sustain and strengthen Scottsdale's position as a premier international and national tourism destination and resort community.**

The Property is not located in the Resort Corridor per se, however, it is located on one of the most well traveled streets in Scottsdale. The proposed development will be a visually attractive alternative to the majority of the existing housing located on the site. It will also provide housing to support the tourism industry.

**2) Encourage and maintain a high level of diverse, quality retail and entertainment activity in Scottsdale that supports the needs of Scottsdale's residents and visitors.**

The Property will provide consumers to utilize the existing retail and entertainment activity that exists along the Shea corridor.

**3) Encourage and support a diversity of businesses that contribute to Scottsdale's sales and property tax base so that needed infrastructure, physical amenities, services, and the expansion of such services are provided.**

The Property will utilize existing infrastructure to the site, and the developer will provide the additional utilities needed for the property, so the City's burden will be minimal. The property tax base will increase significantly, as the values of the proposed medium-density properties are expected to be higher than the values of the existing low-density properties, and higher in price than any existing medium density housing.

**4) Foster new and existing economic activities and employment opportunities that are compatible with Scottsdale's lifestyle.**

The City is looking to attract 'knowledge workers' in the economic sectors of medical/healthcare, technology/research and development, and biomedical research. The property is expected to have housing values and amenities that would accommodate the type of workers the city is looking to attract, as well as supporting home offices.

**5) Locate and integrate non-residential development to improve access and visibility and to protect the integrity of neighborhoods.**

The proposal accomplishes this by provided a buffer for the low-density residential community along Sundown Drive and those low to medium density properties to the north and south of the property from the commercial properties along Shea Boulevard.

**6) Maintain and develop partnerships that will support and promote quality employment and business opportunities.**

The Property will provide consumers for the local business community as well as housing for the type of employees the City is looking to attract.

**7) Sustain the long-term economic well being of the city and its citizens through redevelopment and revitalization efforts.**

The proposed development will accomplish this by redeveloping an area containing several neglected single-family homes and creating a community that will have a positive lasting impact on the area.

### **III. Neighborhoods.**

The City of Scottsdale's General Plan aims that neighborhoods should be in harmony with the unique character and particular features that each possess.

As discussed previously, the area immediately surrounding the Property is primarily low and medium density residential, with a small office component to the east and a golf course and medium density residential to the north.

The proposed development of approximately eight units per acre is appropriate given the surrounding area and the sites proximity to Shea Boulevard.

The Neighborhood section of the General Plan has five goals, represented below:

**1) Enhance and protect diverse neighborhoods so they are safe and well maintained.**

The Property will utilize existing infrastructure, public resources, and utilities while providing housing for the aforementioned 'knowledge workers' the City is looking to attract. It will also provide a buffer from Shea Boulevard for the existing Sundown Ranch and Starfire residential communities. The clusters of townhomes will be accessed from a private road paralleling Shea Boulevard and separated from Shea by a significant landscape buffer. Gated access to the private road will be either from 77<sup>th</sup> Place or from Shea Boulevard, to be determined at a later date. Finally, it will have a self-contained homeowners association, responsible for maintenance and outward appearance of the community.

**2) Use redevelopment and revitalization efforts to provide for the long-term stability of Scottsdale's mature residential and commercial neighborhoods.**

The proposed development will replace severely neglected single-family homes, only one which is owner occupied, with new housing and new landscaping. The quantity and type of homeowner's will help provide Scottsdale with the economic growth that is being targeted by the City.

**3) Sustain the long-term economic well being of the city and its citizens through redevelopment and neighborhood preservation and revitalization efforts.**

The development of approximately 74 to 79 new housing units will help support the existing businesses along the Shea commercial corridor while providing housing for the type of worker the City seeks to attract.

**4) Preserve and enhance the unique sense of neighborhood found in diverse areas of Scottsdale through neighborhood conservation.**

The Property is in the West Cactus Character Area, which contains low to medium density housing with supporting commercial aspects. The proposed development with fit in that context in style (Mediterranean) and character.

**5) Promote and encourage context-appropriate new development in established areas of the community.**

The proposed development will provide housing options that blend with the character of the surrounding communities. The physical design will be Mediterranean in style, similar to that found in the West Cactus Character Area. The layout will encourage open spaces between units, which will gently merge into the golf course adjacent to the property. The medium density housing will offer a greater alternative to more people wishing to live in the area where they work/play. The close proximity to the Loop 101 and public transportation will provide easy access to those who must travel outside of Scottsdale to work.

#### **IV. Open Space.**

The City of Scottsdale has long had a desire to conserve open spaces for both recreational purposes and the preservation of natural areas. One of the best ways to preserve open spaces is to increase the density in the already developed portions of the City. This allow homeowners that would normally be forced to live along the outskirts of the City, closer to the preserved areas, to live 'in town', away from the open spaces.

**A. Open Space and Recreation.**

The General Plan references eight goals in its' Open Space and Recreation section:

**1) Protect and improve the quality of Scottsdale's natural and urban environments as defined in the quality and quantity of its open spaces.**

The Property is located in a previously developed area, so it does not contain 'natural' elements of note. However, it is adjacent to a golf course, and the accompanying open spaces designed into the community will provide a natural segue to the existing open golf course.

**2) Manage a comprehensive open space program that is responsive to public need, delivers high quality customer service, and exemplifies the city's commitment to leadership in environmental affairs.**

This does not particularly apply to the Property, as it is only eight acres in whole. However, the proposed development will provide a significantly increased property tax base over the existing land use. These taxes will provide the City with the needed resources to continue its' preservation and open space policies and goals.

**3) Acquire and develop open space identified (by the City Council) as high priority through land dedication or purchase.**

Again, this does not directly apply to this infill project. However, the ability to provide several dozen homeowners with an opportunity to live 'in town' versus on the fringes, nearer the preserved lands will only help in future preservation efforts.

**4) Encourage and cooperate with other governmental agencies to preserve and protect regional open space and to acquire, develop, maintain and operate regional facilities that are available to people who live, work or visit the city of Scottsdale.**

Similar to the previous response, this small infill project indirectly achieves this goal.

**5) Improve the quality of life for all Scottsdale residents by ensuring a wide range of recreational facilities and services.**

The proposed development does this by redeveloping an existing mature area with higher density residential. Homeowners can easily utilize the Loop 101, public transportation, and the multitude of commercial and retail development in the area. The community will also provide a higher tax base for the City to provide the recreational facilities and services required.

**6) Cooperate with and support the school districts that serve Scottsdale to be able to continue access to school sites and facilities for suitable, safe, and consistent recreational use and enjoyment.**

The Property will provide increased density in a mature area of Scottsdale, ostensibly providing more students than the existing land use for an area of Scottsdale with declining public school enrollment.

**7) Provide attractive, well-maintained community recreational and park facilities that serve the entire community.**

Again, the increased density and higher tax base provided by the site will indirectly assist in achieving this goal.

**8) Provide access to educational, recreational, and cultural services for all residents.**

The proposed development will provide this by allowing dozens of homeowners to live closer to the center of town, as well as providing for the previously mentioned increased tax base.

**B. Preservation and Environmental Planning.**

The City of Scottsdale has a legacy of long-range thinking in regards to environmental conservation and preservation. While the proposed development is in a mature residential area of Scottsdale, it will assist indirectly in achieving the City's goals of ensuring protected areas and protecting air quality.

As the Property is an infill site, it will allow residents to live away from the preserved areas on the outer edges of the City. It will also reduce commuter trips due to its proximity to the Loop 101, public transportation, and general distance from the homeowner's workplace.

## **V. Seek Sustainability.**

The General Plan includes three areas under 'Seek Sustainability':

### **1) Cost of Development.**

Development should pay for itself, and this development complies with that directive. Impact fees paid at the time of development, and tying the community into the existing infrastructure assist in achieving this goal.

### **2) Growth Areas.**

This infill project is not located on the Growth Areas Map, as such this section of the 'Seek Sustainability' aspect does not apply.

### **3) Public services and facilities.**

The change of the property from Rural to Suburban does not affect the impact in this area.

## **VI. Transportation.**

This section of the General Plan refers to Scottsdale's Vision of 'safely, conveniently, and efficiently moving people, goods, and information by providing access and mobility choices. While the size of the proposed development limits its impact on the transportation system of Scottsdale as a whole, it does allow for an increased density in a previously developed area. This limits commuter trips from the outskirts of the City for both work and play. Also, the Property's close proximity to public transportation help achieve this goal as well.

## **VII. Conclusion.**

For each particular General Plan Amendment, it is the developer's duty to conform to the Guiding Principals of the City of Scottsdale's General Plan. This application, which seeks to change the General Plan designation of the Property from Rural Neighborhood to Suburban Neighborhood, clearly meets virtually every goal established in each section of the General Plan.